

THE ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

09/961387

a' A watercraft with a steer-responsive speed controller generates thrust when the steerable propulsion unit is turned beyond a predetermined angular threshold. Turning the steering wheel beyond the threshold causes the speed controller to increase engine speed so that the propulsion unit produces thrust at least equal to the minimal propulsive force needed to effectively steer the watercraft. This system ensures that there is always sufficient thrust for steering the watercraft. This system is applicable to single-engine personal watercraft, twin-engine jet boats or motorboats equipped with swivel-mounted outboard motors. In one form of the system, rotation of the steering wheel beyond the angular threshold causes an actuating cable to open the throttle to increase engine speed. Alternatively, an electronic control system regulates the engine by calculating the optimal power settings based on measurements derived from a speed sensor, a steering angle sensor and, optionally, a throttle position sensor.